

Use of mobile devices and e-services by senior citizens

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Life expectancy is growing. So there is an equally growing need to fully integrate senior citizens in the Knowledge Society where ICT tools play a crucial role. Their current exclusion, due to technological illiteracy, prevents them from fully exercising their rights but also prevents Society from benefitting from their large experience,

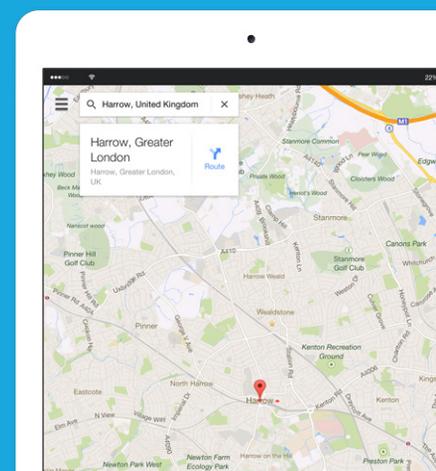
life-wisdom and know-how. Furthermore, with the advent of mobile devices (smartphones and tablets), this problem was aggravated, as more and more information, communication and formal duties are being designed and processed for that context.



The difficulties that this generation experiences in the access and use of new ICT tools should not be excuse for generating inequality and increasing the risk of exclusion. It is necessary to raise awareness and to train the operators that work with senior citizens towards the benefits of using mobile devices. The aim of the UISEL project is to improve the content and quality of training courses for teachers and staff that work with senior citizens, regarding the benefits of new technologies and focusing on the use of mobile devices, for instance, in regard to fiscal obligations, social security issues, emergency situations, medical monitoring, preventing isolation, and even leisure and time occupation.

The definition of the UISEL pedagogical approach in terms of content and technological development must be directly derived from the analysis of the specific learning needs and motivations of the elderly taking in consideration variances in group-specific learning competences.

The consortium conducted a thorough analysis, interviewing practitioners, i.e. senior education trainers and social workers, both formal and volunteers, from different types of organizations: private and public, working in urban and rural areas, acting in high and low socio-economic context, allowing to gather broader perspectives.



The consultation included analysis on the general use of mobile devices by senior citizens, preferred and most useful e-services, experience in training senior citizens with resource to mobile devices and, finally, validation of the UISEL proposed model.

The research conducted comprised also the identification of best practice examples and online resources on senior citizens' learning and ICT usage. This article traces the current European situation regarding this issue.